

Cardinals clip Eagles to take State Class B Championship

"That's a real team effort," bragged Ione Head Coach Gordon Meyers of his "Cardiac Cards".

"MacLaren's first team defense had only given up one touchdown all season. One lousy touchdown!" emphasized the Coach, "but they hadn't played anyone like Ione either," he said with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face.

If it hadn't been for Ione's tight defense, the game might have ended a bit differently.

In the final minutes of the game MacLaren had the ball on Ione's 17 yard line and looked as if they might drive in a TD when a MacLaren player fumbled the ball and Ione's Shawn LaRue pounced on it. Ione's quarterback Dennis Stefani then let the clock tick out as the MacLaren Hawks helplessly stood by watching.

The first scoring of the game came on a 47 yard screen play pass to senior Kevin McCabe from Stefani. Stefani then connected with Robin LaRue to boost the score to 8-0. The powerful Ione line held MacLaren scoreless through the first quarter, something the Woodburn team is not used to by any means.

"MacLaren is used to holding their opponents like that, not the other way around," said Coach Meyers. "Before they played us they had only given up 54 points the whole season. (a six point average per game) and we scored 30 on them. That's more than half their total."

The second quarter saw another pass from Stefani to McCabe for 22 yards with Stefani hitting Gregg Rietmann for 2, raising the score to 16-0.

When Stefani kicked off, little did he know that the Hawk who caught the ball would lateral pass it to star running back Terry Evans who ran in 75 yards for a touchdown.

"That happened to us in the game against Dufur. We had them 16-0 when they ran back a kick-off. It can really fire up a team," said Meyers. MacLaren scored on the conversion play and momentum seemed to sweep to the over-sized Hawks.

Ione scored once more on a four yard Stefani run, and Danny McElligott caught a pass in the endzone to leave MacLaren in the dust at halftime, with the Redbirds leading 24-8.

great game. I expect it of him and he always comes through. Shawn (LaRue) played super, probably the best he has all year.

"Danny (McElligott) played great. Dennis (Stefani) did great, his passing percentage wasn't as high as it has been sometimes this year but it was over 240 yards (264 yards in the air). Well, everybody played super!"

That was evidently the case, as Stefani wound up his arm to unleash a 60 yard pass to

Story By Janet McElligott

No sooner were they out of the locker room than the Hawks scored again, with Evans running 23 yards for a TD and then running in the two extra points. "He's the best runner we've faced since..." Meyers pondered a moment and said, "a long time." Terry Evans, a big 200-pound tailback finished the game with 205 yards rushing, out of MacLaren's 280 total. "Yes, he's definitely the best big back I've seen. It's said he runs the 100 in 10.7. They had several very good players," said Meyers of MacLaren.

Meyers felt Ione must have had some excellent players, too.

"Because we're the ones who are number one," he said. "Take Glen Grebs," he pointed out. "He was physically beaten all day long. He had a kid who was at least 70 pounds (actually 72 pounds) heavier than him pounding him, trying to get him to rush the ball. He never did," says Meyers who was bursting with admiration for his 145 pound center. "Being a center is a thankless job," he confides. "I should know, I was one," he laughs. "And you know, that kid never did get to Dennis all day."

"Terry (Starr) had his usual

Danny McElligott who scored, ending the Cardinals scoring at 30 points.

MacLaren wasn't finished for the night as Terry Evans took the Hawk ball over the goal line one more time, and another TD was taken in by another MacLaren player, leaving the score at 30-28, the closest Cardinal win.

Meyers attributed the win over MacLaren to the better shape of the Cards. He spoke of Ione's "running the hill" drill. "That hill has won a lot of ballgames for us. I hear a lot of bellyaching about it, but it puts us in better shape."

Was Meyers always so confident of the "Big Win"?

He said yes. "I knew what we had. I knew what those guys could do."

"Since the seventh grade, the Ione seniors had said they'd take the state football title, and when it finally got down to the brass tacks they pulled it off."

"They're going to be hard to replace," said Coach Meyers, speaking of seniors Kevin McCabe, John Lindstrom and Danny McElligott who graduate from the title team.

This is the fifth consecutive year that the Big Sky Champions have become the State Titleists.



Cardinal seniors Danny McElligott, John Lindstrom and Kevin McCabe ended their high school football careers in style Saturday. The three graduating Cardinals are shown here with state football championship trophy during ceremonies following hard-won victory over MacLaren.

The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES SPORTS



Ione defender outmaneuvers MacLaren defender to break up pass play along sidelines, grinding a Hawk drive to a halt. Redbird defenders rose to the occasion throughout the championship game, though their opponents were consistently bigger in size.



Hometown fans were barely restrained by rope along the Cardinal sidelines Saturday. Emotions were not restrained at all, as the "Cardiac Cards" lived up to this season's nickname throughout the contest, playing their best game of a phenomenal season.



MacLaren quarterback hurls ball into end zone in disgust, after Cardinal defenders foiled a fourth quarter Hawk scoring drive in a classic goal line stand. Gregg Rietmann raises fist in victory salute, while fellow Cards Mark Patton and Robin LaRue look on. Official is marking ball's position, not giving touchdown signal. The scoreboard gives the final tally.